Camila Medina

English Castle Bilingual School

Danlí, El Paraíso, Honduras

Togo, Poverty due to Unemployment

**Creating Job opportunities in Togo**

Togo is a country located in the western part of Africa, and it is one of the smallest within it. According to Mawudeku K (2007) , since 1993, Togo has been in the process of a democratic change. The political and social conditions were affected by this political catastrophe due to the lack of respect for human rights by the authorities. Due to this there is an absence of employment opportunities. The unemployment rate in Togo increased 4.07 percent in 2022 despite that, it has been recorded that the unemployment rate has extended significantly compared to other years.

A typical family in Togo is usually formed by three to four members. According to Anonymous (2023) the monthly income is 86.21 USD (52,500 West African Francs). As stated by Thelwell K (2024) , Togo has one of the weakest health systems in West Africa due to the lack of staff, equipment, supplies, and proper facilities. Half of the population in Togo cannot afford the necessary medication and health services that they need, so that's a reason why hospitals in Togo don't have the best supply system nor the right amount of healthcare workers.

Togo borders Ghana, Benin and Burkina Faso. Decalo S et al.(2024) informs that Togo is a country of 21,853 square miles and the population being 8,399,000 people. Their dwellings are mud tower houses. According to Andin C (2022), In Togo one of the main sources of energy is fish so Togolese people get up early in the morning to prepare it. People from here sometimes gather outside in food stands to eat their breakfast which usually consists of corn porridge or corn millet pâte with a spicy sauce, but people typically get their food by harvesting it since over 50 percent of Togo’s population are engaged in agriculture so a big percent of land is used for agricultural processes. As specified by Mateski M (2023) Togo has a Unitary Presidential republic system meaning that they only have one level of authority and their president is Faure Gnassingbé.

What is the severity of this topic? Well, unemployment can happen all around the world. Unemployment refers to individuals who are searching for jobs, but unluckily they are unable to find one. As said, the unemployment rate in Togo has been increasing significantly over the past few years meaning there are lower chances of acquiring a job. So due to this in Togo and many other countries in the world there are high poverty rates. According to the WFP (2019) Togo is classified as one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and over 50% of its population is living under the poverty line. This leads to: malnutrition, limited access to education and health services, poor housing, and higher risks of mortality. According to Anding C (2022) due to the need for employment, sometimes mothers with babies carry them on their back because they don't have anyone to take care of their children and they also need to work to support their family. Stated by Kota K et al.(2023) Togo rates as one of the countries with highest poverty rates and food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite many government led programs a big amount of the population still suffer from food insecurity and malnutrition, mainly the most vulnerable groups of people like women, children and elderly. Stated by Hogarth A (n.d) many families in Togo have been affected by the change of prices after the pandemic, they even have to change their jobs which made enough money before but now they have to look for other sources of income. Sadly many children from these families go to bed hungry due to the lack of food, like a mother described; “ Hearing my children cry out for hunger is very painful. It is painful seeing them go to bed hungry.” (Ayitevi, n.d)

**So what can we do about this problem?**

This issue is very common and there are many ways of helping it. A really good idea is for successful people with businesses from wealthier countries to go to Togo. It could be a manufacturing job, for example a CEO from a tobacco company could move their business to the country, this provides around 1,000 or more people employment. How can we get the founders of businesses to come to this country? In this type of country labor is not expensive, the CEO’s can get better profit since they are not paying very high amounts of money to their workers. Still this could help many people without jobs that are in need of employment.

One example could be tobacco companies in Honduras like Davidoff Cigars. This company has its main business in The US and Europe but operates in countries like Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

There is another advantage I should mention, which are direct and indirect benefits. As mentioned before the company will help a big crowd of people to have a job, that is the direct benefit, because they are helping them by providing them a job and paying them. And the indirect benefits are the ones which help other people out, for example if the workers of these companies need to buy lunch they would probably buy from a food stand outside their company. Thus they are helping these people by being able to buy their food.

How will we know the people will not be forced to work long hours? Well, normally in many countries and in Togo the law establishes that a person should work eight hours a day, but factories do not want to stop producing, so they have workers manufacturing their products all day. But a solution for this is to establish shifts. Because a person is intended to work eight hours a day that would be three shifts since a day has 24 hours. The way this works is that a group of employees go to work at a designated hour and after their 8 hours have passed the next group comes to the factory. So this will also give jobs to more people thanks to the shifts.

Why would it need foreign aid to help with the poverty in this country? The government of Togo doesn't have enough strength to make these employment sources by itself, so the best thing to do is to have foreign aid. What the citizens can do to support the government, is to train themselves to acquire the skills and abilities to be a very good and qualified workforce. Some examples can be in agriculture, sewing, mechanics, electricians, etc., or mainly the kind of companies that could go to the country.Why the US? The United States has always been open to help other countries in need, and it is a country that is very developed and has a big economy. The most useful foreign aid will be to hospitals and schools, since they will provide a better lifestyle for the country and more knowledge.

How much will this take? According Jusko, J ( 2023) approximately around 2 - 3 years ( 2023 ), since the whole factory has to be built, it depends on the design complexity and size of the factory to see approximately how much it would take, not only the outside of the facility but also the equipment the workers are going to use to manufacture the products.

The government should be the one in charge to get in contact with the CEO’s and make them an offer, in order for their country to be a better place for its citizens. Some things the government can do to attract the CEO’s, can be to reduce taxes. Normally in many countries for factories to move their raw materials and machinery they have to pay taxes . As mentioned before this can make foreign companies want to do business in Togo. Will this be a bad decision from the government? Not really, just because they stopped getting the money from those taxes doesn’t mean they will not get money from the factory, but instead these factories will give a lot of people employment, and those people at the same time will pay taxes, and give greater benefits for the country. Some backfires could be pollution due to the factories producing abundantly and also another one could the loss of resources used in aid; Political issues could affect the expected result, for example that a country assists schools by sending aid, but now they don't know what happened to the things they delivered because they didn't use it as intended

In conclusion there has been a significant rate of unemployment over the past years in Togo, meaning there are many individuals looking for a job but they are unable to find one. Thus making these people not get an income source and living in poverty. Due to this there is malnutrition, just limited access to education and health services etc. Plus, in Togo the most common jobs have to do with agriculture so some jobs are forestry and fishing. (Trading Economics - 2024) 70.23 percent of land is used for agricultural purposes. Some of this land could be used for other purposes like human and natural resources. So there could be hospitals or schools to help out with the country's welfare. And the unemployment situation could get better with the help of the developers of companies to move to Togo, and for them to move their factories there. So it can provide many people without a job to have one. The government should be the one to reach out to these companies and help out with taxes. So there is a solution for this problem that we know can work.

**References**

Andin, C. (2022, January 15). *Documentary on togolese people’s lifestyle.* YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy-mg076q8o>.

Anonymous. (2023, January 2). *Minimum wage increase*. République Togolaise. <https://www.republicoftogo.com/toutes-les-rubriques/in-english/minimum-wage-increase#:~:text=The%20minimum%20wage%20in%20Togo%20(SMIG)%20has%20been%20increased.,was%20set%20at%20cfaF%2035%2C000>.

Anonymous. (2024). *Togo - agricultural land (% of land area) 2024 data 2025 forecast 1961-2021 historical*. Togo - Agricultural Land (% Of Land Area) - 2024 Data 2025 Forecast 1961-2021 Historical. <https://tradingeconomics.com/togo/agricultural-land-percent-of-land-area-wb-data.html#:~:text=Agricultural%20land%20(%25%20of%20land%20area)%20in%20Togo%20was%20reported,compiled%20from%20officially%20recognized%20sources>.

Decalo, S., Deschamps, H., & Enchenberg, M. (2024, March 29). *Togo summary*. Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Togo>.

EIF (n.d.). *Togo: Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)*. Togo | Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). <https://www.enhancedif.org/en/country-profile/togo#:~:text=The%20primary%20drivers%20of%20its,cereals%2C%20tubers%2C%20and%20soybeans>.

Hogarth, A. (n.d.). Togo Food Crisis: Two families, one hope. Compassion Australia. <https://www.compassion.com.au/blog/togo-food-crisis-two-families-one-hope?srsltid=AfmBOoo6bex8k_h9c6yGhaN-9aMNwUz4b5JJPraGIdFNvgd_S-pO3rPw>

Jusko, J. (2023, May 4). *Building at the speed of now*. IndustryWeek. <https://www.industryweek.com/operations/article/21262025/building-manufacturing-plants-at-the-speed-of-now>.

Kota, K., Chomienne, M.-H., & Yaya, S. (2023, November 27). *Examining the disparities: A cross-sectional study of socio-economic factors and food insecurity in Togo*. PloS one. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10681261/>

Mateski, M. (2023). *Unitary Government* . Definition, Characteristics & Examples. <https://nigerianscholars.com/tutorials/structure-and-systems-of-government/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-unitary-system/>.

Mawudeku, K. (2007, December 1). *Munich personal repec archive*. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/6015/1/MPRA_paper_6015.pdf>.

Thelwell, K. (2024, May 30). *An analysis of healthcare systems in Togo*. The Borgen Project. <https://borgenproject.org/an-analysis-of-healthcare-systems-in-togo/>